



# SWITZERLAND ON THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL 2023 & 2024

*A NEWSLETTER FROM THE SWISS EMBASSY IN BIH*

In May 2023, Switzerland holds the presidency of the UN Security Council for the first time.

This one-month mandate will allow Switzerland to put its thematic priorities of building sustainable peace and protecting civilians at the forefront, as well as to give impetus to the Security Council's work.

What does the presidency mean for Switzerland? And how does this engagement translate in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

This Newsletter provides an overview of the first few months of Switzerland's seat at the Security Council, spells out its priorities for the next two years, and sheds light on the Swiss focus and programme as it holds the presidency of this most important international body.

We wish you a happy reading!



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#SwitzerlandUNSC



## Bosnia and Herzegovina in the focus of Switzerland's presidency at the UN Security Council

A column by Daniel Hunn, Ambassador of Switzerland to Bosnia and Herzegovina

*On 10 May, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be in the focus of the UN Security Council under Switzerland's first presidency of this important body. Switzerland is striving to ensure good conditions for a constructive discussion on Bosnia and Herzegovina in New York. During its presidency of this month, Switzerland also has the ambition to ensure a smooth running of the Council's work and will seize the opportunity to highlight the priorities defined for its mandate.*

In 1 January 2023, Switzerland assumed its mandate as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. In 2023 and 2024, Switzerland will use this role to promote peace and security, act as an independent bridge-builder, and engage in direct contacts with the important players on the international stage. To do so, we have set four priorities for our term: building sustainable peace, protecting civilians, enhancing effectiveness, and addressing climate security. We also intend to use our two-year engagement in the Security Council to promote our national values and interests, at a time when democracy, human rights and the rule of law come under increasing pressure all around the world.

During the first four months of Switzerland's mandate in the Security Council, we have been working hard to live up to the trust placed in us. Thanks to Swiss efforts, in January 2023, the Council unanimously extended the mandate for cross-border humanitarian aid to Syria allowing aid to reach a region where over 4 million people are in need of support. In February we warned against the threats of rising water levels and more frequent flooding due to climate change as one of the greatest contemporary risks for world peace and security.

After having taken over, early May, the important responsibility of its first presidency at the UN Security Council, Swiss diplomacy strives to ensure a smooth running of the Council's work in order to ease decision making and effectively manage the monthly program of work. During its presidency, Switzerland will also seize the opportunity to highlight its priorities defined for its mandate and give impetus to the Council's work. As its first flagship activity on 3 May, Switzerland organized an open debate on mutual trust for peace and security, thus advancing its priority of "promoting sustainable peace".

On 10 May, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be on the Security Council's agenda, and Switzerland as the chair will endeavour to ensure best possible conditions for a constructive exchange in this regard.

# SWISS ENGAGEMENT AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

A BRIEF OVERVIEW FROM JANUARY - APRIL 2023

## 9 JANUARY

Under Swiss co-penholdership, the UN Security Council renews cross-border humanitarian aid into Syria

## 13 JANUARY

Switzerland strongly condemns Russia's military aggression against the Ukraine

## 1 FEBRUARY

Switzerland supports the mandate renewal of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel for three years

## 13 FEBRUARY

Switzerland re-commits to the protection, reintegration and education for children in armed conflicts

## 14 FEBRUARY

Switzerland warns about the threat of rising sea levels for world peace and security

## 8 MARCH

The President of the Confederation, Alain Berset, underlines the importance of women's participation in political decision-making and peace processes

## 16 MARCH

Switzerland supports the mandate renewal of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for another year

## 30 MARCH

Switzerland underlines 4 areas for the success of "Silencing the Guns" in Africa

## 27 APRIL

Switzerland re-commits to peaceful and multi-ethnic societies in Kosovo

## 1 MAY

**Switzerland becomes president of the Security Council for one month**

## 1 JANUARY 2023

**Switzerland joins the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member**

## 12 JANUARY

Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis calls for respect of the UN Charter in the Security Council

## 30 JANUARY

Switzerland advocates a just solution to the Cyprus issue in the UN Security Council

## 9 FEBRUARY

Switzerland strongly condemns all forms of terrorist activity

## 14 FEBRUARY

Earthquake in Turkey - Switzerland calls for rapid humanitarian access to the civilian population in Syria after the earthquake

## 17 FEBRUARY

Switzerland supports the International Criminal Court's engagement in Sudan

## 24 FEBRUARY

Ignazio Cassis calls for respect of Geneva Conventions and withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine

## 15 MARCH

Switzerland supports the mandate renewal of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for another year

## 22 MARCH

Switzerland co-initiates an informal meeting of the UNSC to discuss the protection of access to water and sanitation in armed conflicts

## 24 APRIL

Switzerland takes part in the open debate on the effectiveness of multilateralism

## 27 APRIL

Switzerland votes in favour of the resolution condemning the ban on women working for the United Nations in Afghanistan

# SWITZERLAND'S PRIORITIES AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL 2023-2024

## PRIORITIES



Building  
sustainable  
peace

Protecting  
civilians

Addressing  
climate security

Enhancing  
effectiveness

On 9 June 2022, the UN General Assembly elected Switzerland as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

The Federal Council adopted four thematic priorities for Switzerland's term on the Security Council. Switzerland intends to represent its foreign policy values and interests in the Security Council.

It notably seeks to build sustainable peace, protect civilians in armed conflict, address the impacts of climate change on security and improve the Security Council's effectiveness.

More generally, Switzerland strives to engage credibly across the full range of the Security Council's agenda, which mainly focuses on individual country situations.

[\*\*Read More Here\*\*](#)

And discover in the next pages how Switzerland implements these priorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

# PRIORITY #1

## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PEACE

Switzerland has many years of experience and a strong track record in promoting peace and helping to prevent armed conflicts. As part of its peace policy, Switzerland provides its good offices in conflict situations, including mediation services and protecting power mandates. Its flexibility, professionalism and discretion are widely acknowledged in UN peace processes and by parties to conflict.



As a member of the Security Council, Switzerland strives to ensure that the following issues are addressed, among others:

- Confidence building and continued cooperation among states within the Security Council;
- Effective UN peacebuilding;
- Respect for human rights;
- Protection of minorities;
- Equal Women's participation in peace processes and UN peacekeeping missions able to tackle problems in affected countries.



# PRIORITY #1

## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PEACE

In **Bosnia-Herzegovina** as well, Switzerland has an interest in lasting stability. It supports the reform efforts of the country's authorities at all levels - state, entities, cantons and municipalities.

Switzerland encourages political dialogues in Bosnia and Herzegovina aimed at inclusive and democratic governance with a focus on human rights and the peaceful coexistence of multi-ethnic societies.

In this regard, Switzerland also supports the work of the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the country's integration to the European Union.

Discover some examples of the  engagement:

- 1 Promotion of dialogues in Sarajevo;
- 2 Engagement for free and fair elections, most recently in October 2022 ;
- 3 Promotion of the respect of human rights; and the protection of minorities;
- 4 Screenings and discussions around gender equality and women's entrepreneurship.



## PRIORITY #2

# PROTECTING CIVILIANS



The civilian population pays far too high a price in armed conflicts. Switzerland's long-standing humanitarian tradition and commitment to international humanitarian law are recognised worldwide. Protecting civilians and persons no longer taking part in hostilities is at the heart of the Security Council.

In the Security Council, Switzerland strives to ensure, among others, that the following issues are addressed:

- Ensuring strict and more comprehensive compliance with international humanitarian law;
- Special attention to the protection of children, patients, refugees, medical staff and facilities, aid shipments and critical infrastructure in armed conflicts;
- Enhancing the prosecution of violations of international humanitarian law;
- Respect for human rights and protection of minorities in conflicts;
- Food security in conflict regions.



## PRIORITY #2

# PROTECTING CIVILIANS

Even in peaceful societies, Switzerland has a long experience in contributing to the protection of all civilians across the globe.

**In Bosnia-Herzegovina,** Switzerland supports Operation Althea with a maximum of 20 members of the Swiss Armed Forces active from the LOT Houses in Mostar and Trebinje. In addition, a maximum of six military personnel are part of mobile training teams ensuring the safe and secure storage of ammunition and weapons stockpiles.

Switzerland also pays particular attention to the respect of human rights and the protection of minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Check out how this engagement looks on the ground:

- 1 Swiss members of Operation Althea patrolling around Mostar;
- 2 Support to demining projects in BiH;
- 3 Engagement for acceptable conditions for refugees in BiH;
- 4 Support to humanitarian law school in Banja Luka.

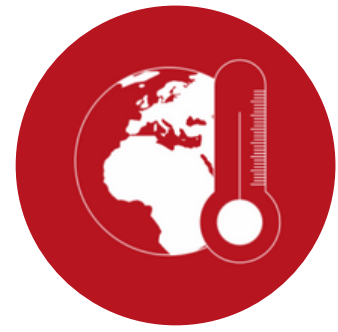




# PRIORITY #3

## ADDRESSING CLIMATE SECURITY

Climate change also threatens peace and international security, as a risk multiplier with the potential to exacerbate existing political, social, economic and ecological stress factors. Climate change also threatens peace and international security, as a risk multiplier with the potential to exacerbate existing political, social, economic and ecological stress factors. The most vulnerable population groups are usually the most exposed to climate risks.



During its term on the UN Security Council, Switzerland strives to ensure, among others, the following:

- Addressing the security and peace policy-relevant impacts of climate change and identifying possible solutions;
- Establishing links with other key objectives of Swiss foreign policy, such as protecting civilians, reducing the risk of disasters, preventing conflicts and countering violent extremism;
- Finding solutions, drawing on the expertise of the Federal Administration as well as that of the scientific community, civil society and International Geneva in particular.



# PRIORITY #3


## ADDRESSING CLIMATE SECURITY

Bosnia-Herzegovina is exposed to various natural hazards. Reducing the risk of disasters that impact the country and its citizens is one of the state policy's critical development issues for the future.

**In Bosnia-Herzegovina,** Switzerland shares its expertise in dealing with natural disasters, applying innovative solutions for climate change adaptation and managing major challenges in the water sector.

Switzerland supports the provision of more efficient water services and climate-smart water infrastructure, and is engaged to strengthen Bosnia and Herzegovina's resilience through its Disaster Risk Reduction programme and more climate-sensitive urban planning and design.

Climate change, human activities and inadequate management also threaten people's access to clean water. Switzerland is supporting institutions in BiH to ensure access to affordable and sustainable water services as a prerequisite for peaceful and democratic development of society.

Swipe to discover the  engagement:

- 1 Evacuation exercise of a school in Janja;
- 2 First aid training for students in Kakanj;
- 3 Detection of leakages in water supply system in Kostajnica;
- 4 Construction of water supply system in suburbs of Prijedor.



## PRIORITY #4

# ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS

Since 2006, Switzerland has been advocating for greater transparency and accountability and the inclusion of non-members in the work of the Security Council. It coordinates the activities of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group of 27 countries. Switzerland supports, among others, the responsible use of the veto by permanent members of the Security Council.



A code of conduct drawn up by the ACT group calls on all Council members not to vote against a credible draft resolution that seeks to prevent mass atrocities. Over 120 countries around the world have already committed to this code.

During its term, Switzerland would strive to ensure, among others, the following:

- Improve sanctions regimes' compliance with rule of law principles;
- Institutional strengthening of the Ombudsperson for UN sanctions;
- Promote closer linkages between the work carried out in different UN locations, including Geneva;
- Improve the Security Council's processes, capacity to act and accountability.



# SWITZERLAND'S PRESIDENCY OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL



Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis chaired a debate of the UN Security Council on 3 May 2023, which focused on building trust. © FDFA

## In May 2023, Switzerland holds the presidency of the UN Security Council for the first time

This role is bound by rules. Its primary purpose is to ensure that Security Council business runs smoothly so that the council can take decisions. The members of the Security Council assume the presidency in turn.

In this capacity, the country holding the presidency of the Security Council chairs meetings and, if necessary, represents the council externally, before other UN bodies such as the General Assembly, and before the media. The president can also convene additional meetings depending on current world events and at the request of other member states.

Switzerland's one-month presidency will allow it to focus on its thematic priorities for its 2023-24 membership and to give impetus to the Security Council's work.

[\*\*Find Out More\*\*](#)

# WHAT TO EXPECT: A FEW LANDMARKS FOR THE SWISS PRESIDENCY IN MAY

While the basis of the Security Council's programme is to a large extent predetermined, namely by the necessary extension of mandates of UN peace missions or sanctions regimes established, the presidency may also organise its own meetings.

Switzerland is planning two flagship events in May which are directly related to its foreign policy profile and priorities. Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis and President of the Confederation Alain Berset will chair the open debates. Federal Councillor Viola Amherd is also expected to chair a Security Council meeting on UN peace missions.

## **3 MAY: OPEN DEBATE ON "BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PEACE"**

Swiss Federal Councillor Cassis chaired this debate at the beginning of May. The debate sought to identify ways of strengthening the role of the Security Council, the UN and other actors in confidence-building and armed conflict prevention. The event also served to highlight the important contribution of International Geneva to the Security Council's work on peace and security.

## **23 MAY: OPEN DEBATE ON "PROTECTING CIVILIANS"**

The UN Secretary-general will present his annual report on protecting civilians to the Security Council in May. Swiss President Berset will chair the session on this topic, in the presence of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric Egger. The open debate will focus on the impact of conflict on hunger among civilians and in particular the protection of civilian infrastructure for food production and distribution.

## **END OF MAY: 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF UN PEACEKEEPING**

Swiss Federal Councillor Amherd is expected to speak on behalf of Switzerland in New York to highlight the extraordinary achievements of the up to 100,000 UN peacekeepers who are deployed all over the world, working in dangerous conditions to prevent conflicts, protect civilians, promote political solutions and support democratic processes.

The tenth anniversary of the Swiss-led ACT Group also falls during Switzerland's one-month presidency. The aim of the group is, among other things, to strengthen the working methods of the Security Council. For example, the ACT Group works to ensure that current and future Security Council members do not vote against resolutions when it comes to cases of war crimes or crimes against humanity.

[\*\*Discover More\*\*](#)

# ADDITIONAL RESSOURCES

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